

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL #11

Training Ranges (land and associated air space used for live fire ranges, maneuver, testing and development designated for Military Operations in Urban Terrain training) capable of supporting current and future military training to standard.



Reseeding efforts took place in September to reestablish vegetation in a Fort Carson training area damaged by a wildland fire in April 2008.

Where the goal fits in the Fort Carson Strategic Action Plan

- Goal #1** Promote mutual respect, professional development, personal growth and teamwork, while celebrating success.
- Goal #2** Provide the services and support that contribute to mission readiness.
- Goal #3** Positively contribute to the spiritual, physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of the Mountain Post Community and create opportunities to enhance understanding of Fort Carson for our local neighbors.
- Goal #4** Provide vibrant, healthy, safe and environmentally-friendly places and spaces and Hometown services for the Mountain Post.
- Goal #5** Transform Fort Carson people, processes, products, places and profits – to show by our actions what sustainability and environmental management is, and its critical role in meeting the mission in all its dimensions by 2027.

TRAINING LANDS

Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program Conservation Easements and Leases

Approximately 65,000 acres along 25 miles of Fort Carson's southern and eastern perimeters are under annual conservation leases/purchase options through spring of 2009 on the Walker Ranches preventing future training-land restrictions associated with incompatible development. Additionally, 16,800 acres of permanent conservation easements have been acquired on the Walker Ranches.

El Rancho/Midway Buffer Zone Project

The U.S. Army, with the support of El Paso County, is pursuing third party acquisition of 20,000 acres on the eastern boundary of the Installation within the El Rancho and Midway Ranch Developments. To date, approximately 76 undeveloped lots (more than 650 acres) have been purchased at Pioneer Village within 1.5 miles of Fort Carson as part of an effort to gain a buffer zone between Fort Carson training lands and development in the area.

Cultural Resources Management

This year, approximately 12,000 additional acres were inventoried for cultural resources on the PCMS and an additional 11,000 acres inventoried for cultural resources on Fort Carson to facilitate training land requirements. The Cultural Resources Management staff increased the Global Cultural Property Protection educational awareness training for Soldiers and the community regarding significant heritage resources in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fort Carson Training Ranges

The Directorate of Plans, Training and Mobilization (DPTMS) Range Division purchased a portable compressed soil block machine in August for use in building training structures. This leading-edge technology uses soil versus wood or concrete to create building blocks that can be reused, reprocessed or returned to the environment.

In order to increase the use of renewable energy downrange, the Range Division purchased an additional 100 photovoltaic solar panels to power battery-operated target devices on multiple ranges.

Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site

Grassroots efforts are taking place to pass on sustainability messages to the citizens of Southeastern Colorado, including energy conservation, water conservation and buying local goods and services.

Wildfire Management

Fort Carson and PCMS fire fighting personnel assisted with the Training Area (TA)-25 Wildland Fire in mid-April for seven days until it was contained. The unpredictable fire burned approximately 9,000 acres. In mid-June Fort Carson and PCMS fire fighters were again called to fight the Bridger Fire, which blazed an estimated 46,000 acres and took more than two weeks to contain. More than 350 fire fighters responded to the Bridger Fire. Both wildland fires were assisted by multiple regional and national agencies. Seeding efforts took place in September to reestablish vegetation severely damaged by the wildand fire at TA-25. Approximately 4,100 acres of the 9,000-acre fire site was covered using aerial seeding.

In an effort to mitigate future wildland fire impacts, the Range Division is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the DPW Environmental Division in developing a seed mix comprised of species that show resistance to burning for incorporation in fire breaks around training ranges.



A transmitter is put on a fringed tailed bat at PCMS to assist with monitoring efforts.

Wildlife Management

Fort Carson and PCMS biologists established a monitoring program for grassland birds that will run for 10 years and provide feedback on the health of this important ecological system. The program will provide data to ensure the sustainability of Installation grasslands as training and environmental resources.

A preliminary survey of the main area of the Installation known and suspected to have amphibians and/or marshbirds present was conducted in late summer to acquire information in order to develop a sustainable plan for ditches/watercourses.

Wildlife management at Fort Carson and PCMS is enhanced by a number of partnerships with agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC).



Using soil blocks versus constructing permanent structures or temporary lumber/plywood structures will reduce the operational costs and the solid waste generated to support military training.



FUTURE GOAL 11 INITIATIVES:

- Conduct a raptor survey, in partnership with the USFWS and the University of Minnesota, to reevaluate the relationship between nesting raptors (hawks, eagles and owls) and military training.
- Continue to inventory and evaluate cultural resources to better manage training lands.
- Continue a five-year Fort Carson and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service projects to determine if a wild population of the black-footed ferret can be established on the Installation. The ferret is the rarest mammal in North America. Success in this endeavor will help recover the species and restore a missing carnivore to the shortgrass prairie ecosystem.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Engaging land use planning efforts both inside and outside of the Installation boundaries to prevent encroachment issues.
- Finding sustainable, innovative ways to meet the rapidly evolving changes to tactics, doctrine and advancing technology within the Army.
- Creating avenues for funding and resource allocation associated with Fort Carson and PCMS wildland fire events, including Cultural Resource Management objectives.